

Notes
I-75 Oakland County Planning/Environmental Study,
I-75 Council Meeting
July 30, 2002
Madison Heights Library, 10:00 a.m.

Background: This was the second meeting of the I-75 Council

Purpose: The principal purpose of the meeting was to review the preliminary findings with respect to transit and HOV analyses.

Attendance: See attached list.

Discussion:

Introductions

Dave Wresinski opened the meeting with introductions. Joe Corradino indicated that the notes from the May 22nd meeting had been distributed twice prior to the meeting, and inquired if there were any comments. He also noted that the notes would be posted on the Web once finalized. Robin Beltramini indicated she hadn't received the notes. She was provided a copy and asked to comment as time permits.

Transit / HOV Analysis

Joe Corradino introduced the discussion of the results of the Transit/HOV analysis, a report on which had been distributed in advance of the meeting. He noted that at the August 21st public meeting, this subject would be the main topic of the presentation. To confirm the accuracy of the results obtained to date, a meeting will be held with SEMCOG to discuss the models being used for the analysis.

Ken Kaltenbach then explained the results of the analysis using a PowerPoint presentation. He indicated the first step was to check the model that had been transmitted from SEMCOG against the model that had been used in the Feasibility Study in the year 2000. Then for this EIS work, a mode-split model had been added to the newest SEMCOG model. He explained the nature of the nested logit mode-split model.

Tom Barwin asked what population forecasts were included in the model. Ken Kaltenbach responded they were SEMCOG's 2025 forecasts.

Ken Kaltenbach went on to explain the characteristics of the generic rapid transit system included in the Woodward Avenue corridor.

Ron Ristau asked how future transit trips in total with the rapid transit in the Woodward corridor compared to future transit trips with no such transit development. Ken Kaltenbach explained these relations and explained that some transit trips in the Woodward corridor were conversions from bus trips in that corridor.

Joe Corradino noted that the high-quality transit service in the Woodward corridor looks viable as far north as 8- or 9-Mile Road. This was consistent with earlier studies that have been done in the corridor dating back to the mid-70s. But, he noted that beyond 9-Mile Road transit ridership drops significantly.

John Lydick asked why the dropoff was so dramatic north of 9-Mile. Ken Kaltenbach responded it was largely a function of the changes in density, both in terms of population and employment. Tom Barwin asked if he could get a copy of mapping that indicated these densities. Joe Corradino said that Corradino would provide it.

Joe Corradino indicated there were two key questions about transit: 1) Is transit viable in the Woodward corridor?; and, 2) Does it eliminate the need for additional lane on I-75? He stated that the analysis indicated that the answer to the first question is “yes”, and transit is viable in the Woodward corridor south of 9-Mile Road. But the answer to the second question was “no”, that even having high-quality rapid transit in the Woodward corridor would not eliminate the need of an additional lane on I-75.

Ken Kaltenbach then reviewed the tests that were conducted for HOV treatment on I-75. The tests indicated that an HOV lane would carry more people than the adjacent general-purpose lane and that the overall person throughput of I-75 would also improve with an HOV lane. However, the travel time saving (one minute per mile) that is generally considered to be appropriate for implementation of an HOV lane is not achieved. Over the 28 miles analyzed, there was only about a three-minute travel time difference for HOV vehicles compared to those in the general purpose lane. This resulted in a net present worth cost savings of \$7-8 million per year. And, with the HOV, there are issues of enforcement and the local costs associated with it. Nevertheless, Joe Corradino indicated the HOV lane was deserving of more analysis at the “practical alternatives” level of detail.

Tom Barwin asked if any survey work had been done with respect to carpooling. Frank Cardimen said that in a recent year, thousands of surveys had been conducted that basically found carpooling to be an unattractive alternative. Joe Corradino noted that a more recent SEMCOG call-in survey found carpooling was “down the list” of priorities of transportation needs/solutions in Oakland County. Jon Austin added that studies in Oakland and Macomb counties have found that these counties lead the nation in single-auto occupancy. Frank Cardimen added that five years ago, 86.4 percent of drivers indicated they drive alone. For that reason, Frank Cardimen thought that the estimates of use of an HOV lane may be high.

Joe Corradino indicated that during construction of improvements to I-75, if approved, carpools and transit would be an important component of maintenance of traffic.

Dave Vanderveen asked whether any special considerations were being made for trucking and freight. Joe Corradino responded that not specifically related to this analysis.

Joe Corradino summarized the transit/HOV analysis as concluding that transit has a role in the Woodward corridor, but does not eliminate the need to widen I-75. He recommended that further testing of rapid transit is not appropriate as an alternative to widening I-75. But, more analysis is required of HOV.

Indirect/Cumulative Effects

Joe Corradino explained that the analysis for the EIS would look at the “ripple wave” effects of widening I-75 in Oakland and Wayne counties. He generally reviewed the contents of the Indirect (Secondary) and Cumulative Effects Methodology which was included in the materials sent to the Council members in advance of the meeting.

Brian Blaesing noted that, in looking at a graphic on the Indirect/Cumulative Methodology paper, that roads which parallel I-75 seem to show a reduction in traffic. He also noted that some roads seem to be affected that are remote from the project. Joe Corradino indicated that the graphic indicates which roads will experience traffic changes (increases and decreases) in 2025 greater than 10 percent with I-75 widened. The graphics do not show changes from today’s traffic. Brian Blaesing pursued the notion of whether or not the graphic indicated that some roads needed to be improved and whether that might be a component to the Environmental Impact Statement. Joe Corradino said work to date shows where 2025 traffic is expected to change. If those roads need widening because I-75 were widened, the impacts of such would be analyzed as part of the “ripple wave” effects of the project. Joe Corradino cautioned that the preliminary determination of changes in traffic on non-I-75 roads could change as the modeling work advanced.

Tom Barwin asked when the environmental report for the project would be produced. Joe Corradino responded that at the end of this year/the beginning of 2003, the technical data from a number of analyses would be available for public review. He noted there was a scoping meeting scheduled for late August (now set for the 29th) wherein agencies can help set the direction of those analyses. He stated further that the draft EIS would be available approximately a year from now. It would be then followed by the final EIS in late 2003/early 2004.

In response to a question from Tom Barwin, Joe Corradino noted that a public health air quality analysis would not be conducted for the EIS. But, the air quality analysis would discuss air toxic issues. And, it would conform to any needs generated by implementation of the eight-hour ozone standard. Joe Corradino noted that EPA had not set standards for air toxics for mobile sources (i.e., automotive vehicles).

Purpose and Need Statement

Joe Corradino explained that the Purpose and Need statement was an explanation of why a project is needed - why here and why now. It would be distributed to the Council as soon as the draft was approved by MDOT. Nevertheless, he asked all Council members to attend the scoping meeting. A notice would be sent.

Tom Barwin commented that the project needed to project population in a way that changes other than those dependent on current thinking (largely highway influenced) were considered. Joe Corradino noted the population projections are the purview of SEMCOG.

Tom Barwin asked how rapid transit could be excluded from further analysis. Joe Corradino responded that if rapid transit does not meet the need for the project, it should not be included in the mix of alternatives evaluated in the Environmental Impact Statement. Dave Wresinski indicated that analysis of rapid transit beyond the scope of the project and beyond the scope of the federal process was unwarranted. He further noted that land use issues fall to SEMCOG. Garry Bulluck of SEMCOG noted that land use issues are really a state legislative issue.

Robin Beltramini indicated that local financial commitments to roadways and/or transit were, to some degree, competitive decisions. She had a concern that once the dollars were committed to the highway mode, there may be less available to transit. Dave Wresinski responded that insofar as the I-75 improvements were concerned, state money had been allocated for the environmental analysis and design phases, but no monies had yet been committed to construction.

Tom Barwin indicated that transit would better enhance the region's quality of life, including the air quality. Joe Corradino responded that if you take a look at air quality in the cities that have implemented rapid transit systems in recent years, such as San Diego and St. Louis, you simply don't see the kind of mode shift necessary to generate a significant air quality improvement.

Tom Barwin wanted the record to indicate that dropping rapid transit at this point in the process did not meet his understanding of how the EIS would be conducted based on his participation on a SEMCOG Advisory Committee. Dave Vanderveen indicated the approach being taken by the consultant as it relates to rapid transit is consistent with his understanding of the agreed-upon process.

Upcoming Meetings

A public meeting will be held at the Troy Public Library to present the findings of the transit/HOV analysis on August 21st at the same location. Tom Barwin questioned this timing in light of school startup. The Mayor of Troy indicated that he could have the public meeting videotaped so it would be available to individuals at times other than the scheduled meeting time.

The scoping meeting is scheduled for August 28th from 9:30 to 12:00 in the Troy Library. (At the end of the meeting, it was determined that this was a conflict with a SEMCOG meeting and so the date was changed to August 29th.)

The Mayor of Troy asked if everyone agreed that I-75 should be widened. Tom Barwin responded that he did not know the answer to that question, based on the information available at this time.

The meeting ended about noon.

A Public Meeting was scheduled for:

August 21, 2002 6:30-8:30 p.m.

City of Troy Public Library Meeting Room

An Agency Scoping Meeting was scheduled for:

August 29, 2002 9:30-12noon

City of Troy Public Library Meeting Room

I-75 Environmental Impact Statement
Council Meeting
Date: July 30th, 2002
Time: 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Location: Madison Heights, Michigan

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Robin Beltramini	Troy	6564 Parkview	Troy	48098	248-879-8898	rbeltram@hotmail.com
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